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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/856,414	05/18/2001	Johann Engelhardt	21295/24	7891
29127	7590	12/21/2004	EXAMINER	
HOUSTON ELISEEVA 4 MILITIA DRIVE, SUITE 4 LEXINGTON, MA 02421			CHANG, SUNRAY	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2121	

DATE MAILED: 12/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application N .

09/856,414

Applicant(s)

ENGELHARDT ET AL.

Examiner

Sunray Chang

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 November 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 May 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This office action is in responsive to the paper filed on November 8th 2004.

2. Claims 1 – 16 are presented for examination.

Claims 1 – 16 are rejected.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

3. **Claims 1 – 16 are rejected** under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Christopher R. Fairley et al. (PCT/US95/00665, Appendix G, A Method And Apparatus For Performing An Automatic Focus Operation, June 3rd, 1994, And referred to as **Fairley**

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hereinafter), and in view of Stephen C. Baer (U.S. Patent No. 5,866,911, and referred to as Baer hereinafter).

(Fairley as set forth above generally discloses the basic inventions.)

4. Regarding independent claims 1 and 16,

Fairley teaches,

- a method for setting the system parameters of a confocal laser scanning microscope; [Page 309, Line 10 – 13]
- creation of a user interface interactively with the user; [Page 319, Line 5]
- input of at least one specimen parameter, at least one selectable system parameter by the user, related to at least one definable problem regarding image acquisition; [Page 309, Line 11 – 18]
- proposal of other system parameters, optimization paths, and imaging strategies regarding image acquisition; [Page 309, Line 21 – 23]
- selection of a proposal by the user; [Page 309, Line 14 – 16]
- automatic setting of the system parameters of a selected system setting or imaging strategy. [Page 309, Line 10 – 11]
- the system parameters are retrieved, in consideration of the definitions, from an expert system stored in a database. [Page 325, Line 15 – 20]

Fairley does not teach,

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- the system parameter is at least one of an optimum irradiation intensity at the focus, selection of the objective to be used, a detection pinhole radius, and photomultiplier voltage.

Baer teaches,

- the system parameter is at least one of an optimum irradiation intensity at the focus, selection of the objective to be used, a detection pinhole radius, and photomultiplier voltage. [Col. 1, Line 7 – 12, and Col. 3, Line 48 – Col. 4, Line 36], for the purpose of improving the resolution of a optical system.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include "the system parameter is at least one of an optimum irradiation intensity at the focus, selection of the objective to be used, a detection pinhole radius, and photomultiplier voltage", for the purpose of improving the resolution of a optical system.

5. Regarding dependent claim 2, Fairley teaches an input of at least one of the following parameters determines a specimen dimension [specific type of wafer] to be imaged, a specimen region [specific type of wafer] to be imaged, number of optical steps [process step], a specimen property [specific type of wafer] to be imaged, and a detection method [number of slices of data].

[Page 309, Line 20 – 26]

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6. Regarding dependent claim 3, Fairley teaches the detection method involves alternatively the use of a fluorescence method [Page 312, Line 20 – 21] and a reflection method [Page 312, Line 24].

7. Regarding dependent claim 4, Fairley teaches the proposal step [recipe] concerns the use of a suitable objective [properly specified recipe] having the highest possible numerical aperture [camera intensity, Page 326, Line 7]; the maximum resolution [laser scan x, y solution] achievable with the selected objective, [Page 325, Line 14 – Page 326, Line 18]

Fairley further teaches, the present resolution on the basis of specific and previously set system parameters [most of the optic parameters], are reported to the user [Page 325, Line 15 – 20]; and the number of pixels [number of slices] per image plane is proposed to the user [loaded into the LIS]. [Page 326, Line 6 – 12]

8. Regarding dependent claim 5, Fairley teaches the specimen property [sample thickness] to be determined serves to ascertain the optimum irradiation intensity [laser intensity]; and an optimum irradiation intensity [laser intensity] is proposed to the user [loaded into the LIS where the recipe is load]. [Page 326, Line 6 – 12]

9. Regarding dependent claim 7, Fairley teaches the interface upon selection of a creation of the user t least one system parameter; all those system parameters that are influenced by the selection are presented for the user, [Customize and automate many of the instruments function, Page 325, Line 14 – 15]

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Fairley further teaches, the user is also informed as to how, on the basis of the selection of a system parameter, an image acquisition can be performed with the best possible quality.

[each recipe's screen is given a descriptive name, Page 325, Line 27 – 28]

10. Regarding dependent claim 8, Fairley teaches at least one criterion that is important for the application can be defined for the optimization thereof [autofocus position to the ideal viewing position may also be preset, Page 25 – 26]; and that based on this definition, the further system parameters are interactively proposed and/or automatically set [the laser wavelength, and power, to be used maybe selected, Page 309, Line 22 – 23].

11. Regarding dependent claim 13, Fairley teaches the system parameters [scan parameters] are retrieved [setup], in consideration of the definitions, from an expert system stored in a database [By loading a properly specified recipe, the user can setup the LIS with the exact screen layout and scan parameters, as well as defect sort criteria, without any user input [Page 325, Line 15 – 20].

12. Regarding dependent claim 14, Fairley teaches the system parameters [scan parameters] are ascertained [exact], in consideration of the definitions, using fuzzy logic [if the recipe is found], and are set after selection or automatically [customize and automate]. [Page 325, Line 14 – 20]

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13. Regarding dependent claim 15, Fairley teaches an activatable [automatic operation] and interfacing teaching program [pre-programmed] for optimal - preferably specimen-specific [specific type of wafer] and/or problem specific [laser wavelength, power] - system setting [slices of data, spacing] and/or imaging strategy [autofocus] [Page 309, Line 20 – 26].

14. **Claims 6 and 9 – 12 are rejected** under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Failey, in view of Baer, and further in view of Timothy V. Thompson (U.S. Patent No. 5,483,055, and referred to as Thompson hereinafter).

(Fairley as set forth above generally discloses the basic inventions.)

15. **Regarding Claim 6**, Fairley teaches setting a detection pinhole diameter, an optimized value at which the image acquisition resolution is maximal [pinhole whose diameter has been selected, Page 311, Line 16 - 17].

Fairley does not teach the image acquisition signal-to-noise ratio.

Thompson teaches an optimized value [idealized graph] at which the image acquisition resolution is maximal [full width half max measurement], while the image acquisition signal-to-noise ratio [301, 303, Fig. 3a] is still usable. [Col. 4, Line 20 – 29]

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include "image acquisition

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signal-to-noise ratio” with the motivation being to provide for the purpose of performing an accurate, reliable, high-speed, auto-focus operation.

16. **Regarding Claim 9**, Fairley teaches predefined criterion [Page 309, Line 26].

Fairley does not teach the signal-to-noise ratio.

Thompson teaches signal-to-noise ratio [301, 303, Fig. 3a].

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant’s invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include “signal-to-noise ratio” with the motivation being to provide for the purpose of performing an accurate, reliable, high-speed, auto-focus operation.

17. **Regarding Claim 10**, Fairley teaches user interface [Page 319, Line 5].

Fairley does not teach assistance or solutions for the at least one definable problem are offered by means of the user interface.

Thompson teaches assistance or solutions [second range of motion that is chosen] for predefined problem situations [move to the location at which the maximum absolute value of the electronic focus signal in the second range of motion was measured]. [Col. 2, Line 33 – 41]

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It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include "assistance or solutions for predefined problem situations are offered by means of the user interface" with the motivation being to provide for the purpose of performing an accurate, reliable, high-speed, auto-focus operation.

18. **Regarding Claim 11**, Fairley teaches a method for setting the system parameters of a confocal laser scanning microscope; [Page 309, Line 10 – 13].

Fairley does not teach the following problems:

- "the specimen [in the case of fluorescence specimens] bleaches excessively"; and/or
- "the image data are noisy"; and/or
- "the measurement time is too long"; and/or
- "situations are "the resolution is too low."

Thompson teaches

- "the specimen [in the case of fluorescence specimens] bleaches excessively" [intensity, Col. 1, Line 34]; and/or
- "the image data are noisy" [contrast, Col. 1, Line 47]; and/or
- "the measurement time is too long" [slow, Col. 1, Line 46]; and/or
- "situations are "the resolution is too low." [accuracy, Col. 1, Line 56]

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It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include "the specimen [in the case of fluorescence specimens] bleaches excessively"; and/or "the image data are noisy"; and/or "the measurement time is too long"; and/or "situations are "the resolution is too low." with the motivation being to provide for the purpose of performing an accurate, reliable, high-speed, auto-focus operation.

19. **Regarding Claim 12**, Fairley teaches a method for setting the system parameters of a confocal laser scanning microscope; [Page 309, Line 10 – 13].

Fairley does not teach mutually dependent system parameters are determined by means of an algorithm.

Thompson teaches mutually dependent system parameters are determined by means of an algorithm [because there is a certain amount of over shoot associated with stopping the relative motion between the target and the objective lens, several successive iterations can be performed to position the target closer to the focus position, Col. 2, Line 24 – 27].

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to modify the teaching of Fairley to include "mutually dependent system parameters are determined by means of an algorithm" with the motivation being to provide for the purpose of performing an accurate, reliable, high-speed, auto-focus operation.

Response to Amendment

Claim Objections

20. Applicants correct the informalities in claims 5 and 7 cited antecedently by Examiner; Examiner has withdrawn the claim objections.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

21. Applicants correct the various antecedent basis issues cited by Examiner; Examiner has withdrawn the claim rejections.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

22. Applicants' argument regarding "Fairley, has not disclosed inputting sample parameters such as size density of dye molecules, fluorescence lifetime, excitation and emission wavelengths and the like" (Page 7, line 3 – 4) is agreed with. Fairley has not been cited for rejecting inputting sample parameters such as size density of dye molecules, fluorescence lifetime, excitation and emission wavelengths and the like; Yet, this part has not been claimed also. Yet, new reference, Baer also teaches those features as set forth in current office action.

23. Applicants' argument regarding "Fairley, has not disclosed a microscope system" is disagreed with. Fairley discloses a conventional microscope station, and an Ultrapointe Laser Imaging System. [Page 309, Line 28 – 31]

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24. Applicants' argument regarding "Fairley, has not disclosed a microscope system that then proposed to the user optimal microscope settings, such as which objective to use, optimal irradiation intensity, detection pinhole radius, photomultiplier voltage and the like" (Page 7, line 5 – 7) is agreed with. Fairley has not been cited for rejecting inputting sample parameters such as size density of dye molecules, fluorescence lifetime, excitation and emission wavelengths and the like; Yet, new reference, Baer, has been cited and has been used for amended claim, as set forth in current office action.

Conclusion

25. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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26. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sunray Chang whose telephone number is (571) 272-3682. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anthony Knight can be reached on (571) 272-3687. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-746-3506.

Sunray Chang
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U.S. Patent and Trademark Office



Anthony Knight
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3600

December 15, 2004